

The University of Chicago

AN INQUIRY INTO THE STATEMENT
OF MOTIVES BY READERS

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

1939

By
HELEN L. BUTLER

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HELEN L. BUTLER

ALTHOUGH psychologists, educators, and librarians have for several decades interested themselves in the problems attached to the various functions of reading, concern about the question of why people read at all has been comparatively recent. And yet the answer to that question might solve a good many difficulties encountered by the librarian in supplying readers with the books best suited to them. For upon the "drive" or motive back of the reading activity depend the energy, purposefulness, and perseverance which the individual is willing to devote to that activity.

It is obvious that the reader in search of diversion will not be driven by the same force as will the person whose job, health, or closest ambition demand the understanding of a complicated technical process or the mastering of a foreign language. When advancement in professional status depends on the passing of promotional examinations, for example, reading of a more intensive nature occurs than when the urge is founded on some temporary desire for escape from surroundings or thoughts. For some readers, to have a practical return from reading im-

¹ Essential portion of unpublished Doctor's thesis (University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, 1939).

mediately available and not postponed into an uncertain future is to cause the material to be perused with greater attention than would otherwise accompany the process. With others the opportunity to project themselves into an imaginary world almost entirely motivates their reading and from such reading they take an immediate and a sustained satisfaction. W. W. Hatfield has said: "The chief element that differentiates one reading activity from another is the purpose of the reader at the moment."²

In library practice any additional information which helps to clarify the librarian's knowledge of readers' needs is desirable. Considerable light might be expected from the identification of reading incentives—light which would result in a more intelligent understanding of and sympathy for those needs. The unsatisfactory circumstance of readers being unable to describe the material they want or its treatment and scope because they are unfamiliar with the implications of the subject, are diffident and uncomfortable in the library, or are inarticulate in phrasing their needs may be alleviated by the librarian's ability to judge what is needed when the occasion for the need is made known. And there is avoided the equally unsatisfactory situation which sometimes results when the librarian simply brings all the material on the subject indicated which the library possesses, deposits it before the reader, and leaves him to choose what he thinks he needs.

Only the simplest commodities are so dispensed by commercial firms. With all others the salesman is considered, by virtue of his associations and experience, to have expert advice to offer about the product he sells and so to be in a position to advise the buyer. To a far greater extent the professionally trained librarian is better acquainted with his book collection and its possible help for the reader than is the reader. In any case, when the book collection is too large to be conveniently placed on the table before the reader, a choice of materials becomes

² *An experience curriculum in English: a report of the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1935), p. 100.

imperative. In this choice a knowledge of reading motive will allow the librarian to infer something of the effort the reader is willing to put into his reading and will so provide a clue as to the treatment desired. If the motive can be shown to be a condition affecting many people in the community, its presence will certainly concern a noticeable proportion of these. Learning of its presence and potential power to turn people to books, the librarian may prepare against the call emanating from it by purchasing sufficient material or may use it as a stimulus for reading among those who would not ordinarily think of books as a source of satisfaction in that connection.

The studies made of reading incentives, including this one, have returned inconclusive results. A fundamental difficulty encountered by the few inquirers into the subject—and an obstacle none have been able successfully to surmount—has been the determination of an appropriate and meaningful terminology and its classification into real and discrete groups. Broad, sweeping generalizations are so inclusive as to be meaningless when applied to the reader who appears at the library desk. On the other hand, the narrower the limitation, the more individual the application, the more personal the occasion inspiring it, the less likely is the term to apply to a group of readers, however small, although all may be reading identical books. And the less useful to the library for that reason. Add to this the wishful thinking of many readers which makes them ascribe to their reading purposes which are overambitious for the material read, plus their inability in as many instances to identify the exact impulse which sent them to books, and we easily understand the difficulties which beset the investigator. Too many readers are like a certain Rochester youth in knowing only that they “just have a natural tendency to read.”

COLLECTING DATA

In an attempt to ascertain reasons for such confusion and to identify more exactly, if possible, the primary reading motives, the writer compiled a list of some one hundred purposes which might be satisfied by books. Drawn from her own library ex-

periences and from the materials in print, the list covered thirteen subject fields: fiction, essay, poetry, drama, biography, travel, history, sociology, education, science, business, fine arts, and philosophy-religion. These lists were sent to forty-five libraries of all types—small, medium-sized, and large, specialized and general—over the United States. More than fifty-five librarians and heads of departments checked the list, commenting on the items found there and suggesting others which had been encountered in their reader contacts.

A second list, incorporating these suggestions, was compiled which contained 134 separate items. This was broken down into the thirteen subject fields previously mentioned, each of which included 20 items generally applicable to all fields of knowledge and from 6 to 12 items pertaining particularly to the subject of that list. Thus the thirteen different lists included from 26 to 32 motives each, 20 of which covered the general purposes of school assignment, recreation, association with a keener mind, and information. The last-named was attacked from the various angles pertaining to the job, self-improvement, keeping abreast of the times, satisfaction of curiosity, informal group study, creative activity, and development of personality. Recreation was analyzed as relaxation, the following of a hobby, escape, and contest or puzzle-working, though it was understood that escape can accompany the acquisition of information, as can recreation in general. No attempt was made to disentangle these—it was left for the reader to indicate which was his individual purpose in reading.

To the list was added a page calling for identification of material read and of the reader (the latter by sex, nationality, occupation, age, and educational groups) in order that any relationship which might exist between these factors could be brought to light.

With generosity and professional understanding Mr. John A. Lowe, director of the Rochester (New York) Public Library, consented to the use of the questionnaire in his library, and his staff efficiently administered it. During a nineteen-day period (February 14–March 7, 1938) copies of the questionnaire were

made available in the Rochester Public Library, and readers were invited to fill them out. About 1,850 forms were returned, most of them with full information on the items asked for, although about one-sixth were useless for any part of the investigation.

Of the returned forms 1,725 showed the educational group to which these readers belonged: 7 per cent had grade-school education, about 48 per cent had high school, 34 per cent had college, and about 12 per cent had graduate work. Only 1,427 of these forms were generally useful.

Fewer omissions were noted in the marking of the last item called for—the age group—than in any other except sex. It was clear that the scorer did not tire before completing the form, but that he omitted earlier items because of disinclination to supply the information. One-fourth of the 1,803 readers who filled in this item were in the fifteen to nineteen-years-of-age group, 37 per cent were in the twenty to twenty-nine-years-of-age group, a little less than 24 per cent were in the thirty to forty-four-years-of-age group, and a little less than 15 per cent were over forty-four years old. These figures agree with conditions observed in other library systems, where the number of borrowers over forty years of age is much smaller than that of the teen age or twenties.

The sex of the Rochester readers, as far as the sample may be typical, differs from the usual library distribution. Of the 1,805 people who gave their sex 1,054 (slightly more than 58 per cent) were men, and 751 (slightly less than 42 per cent) were women. Most students of reading report that feminine readers predominate. Significantly, the fiction forms returned in that division of the Rochester Public Library showed 67 per cent women and 33 per cent men.

Forms showing occupation numbered 1,318. Of these the largest class by far consisted of students, and the second largest of housewives. Other occupations were not classified after the first half of the questionnaire had been analyzed, and it became apparent that there was no relationship between occupation and reading motives.

An important assumption must be understood in regard to these figures. Whenever data are collected by such gratuitous methods as were employed in this study it must be taken for granted that the persons who filled out the forms represent in their true proportions the users of the entire library or of the separate collections they are using. It is recognized that the adolescent reader, more accustomed to tests and questionnaires than some of his elders, is not only willing but eager to respond to a request of this kind, whereas older readers may be reluctant to take the time necessary to give the information asked for. Without recourse to actual book-card and registration records for proof, it must be assumed that the forms returned by the patrons represent fairly the separate groups of department users. But, since students represent less than 32 per cent of the given occupations while the fifteen to nineteen-year and the twenty to twenty-nine-year groups represent 62 per cent of the readers, it is not likely that the presence of the students in this study skews the picture disproportionately.

What, then, are the motives which the reader says actuate him when he picks up a book to read?

MOTIVES GOVERNING IN VARIOUS SUBJECT FIELDS

Fiction.—From the tabulated scores of the items checked by readers in various subject fields certain similarities and differences are evident. In fiction obviously the recreational motive runs high. First in rank it was the purpose of 75 per cent of the fiction readers. But general information can also be pleasantly acquired through the medium of fiction, 37 per cent believed. The escape motive ran third, 27 per cent checking it. Fourth in line was curiosity about people in other countries; next, the psychological impulse to analyze human motives and conduct in paper-and-ink creatures. Information that comes from contact with a keener mind than one's own may also be obtained through fiction, 23 per cent of the readers thought. Almost an equal number (22 per cent) frankly admitted the herd motive—reading the books one's friends talk about. It was seventh in rank. Eighth (21 per cent) was the desire to learn history pain-

lessly; ninth (20 per cent), the desire to keep up with new ideas; and tenth (13 per cent), for the fun and suspense which come from not knowing how the story will end.

Least important motives on the fiction list, apparently, were contests and the passing of examinations (less than 1 per cent checked each of these). If Rochester study clubs were reading fiction that winter only four members turned to the public library for their novels during the period of the study. Another four readers wanted from their reading directions for making something. Included among them was a salesman who had evidently obtained pertinent suggestions from Damon Runyon's fiction on other occasions, since he indicated that was his purpose in trying another of the author's works. Less than 2 per cent read fiction because they themselves wanted to write (only five readers checked Item 15 [to teach you how to write]). Six, or 2 per cent, felt that such material might help them prepare for another job; eight (3 per cent) were gathering information to pass on to other people through book reviews, papers, or talks. Six per cent (sixteen people) felt that reading a particular book might help them to form an opinion, and another 6 per cent felt it might help them solve their own problems. They were in agreement, evidently, with Charles Morgan's contention that

... man's happiness or unhappiness, his value or worthlessness, depends upon his private philosophy—on his power to love and to respond to love, on his faculty of pleasure in little things, on his belief or disbelief in heaven and hell, on his capacity for hope and acceptance—in brief on the nature and strength of his secret imagination. Story-telling and poetry teach him this and teach it continually.³

Midway in popularity was a group of motives of such dubious strength as to cause a suspicion that doubling the number of readers might make these scores very high or very low. They included many of the profitable claims commonly advanced to justify the reading of fiction—satisfaction of curiosity, development of personality, furthering of a hobby (reading itself, apparently, as all books by one author or about one subject),

³ "A defense of story-telling," *Yale review*, XXIII (new ser., 1934), 776-77.

vicarious experience, remedying early educational lacks, historical information painlessly acquired, duplication of the satisfactions obtained in some moving-picture performance, and understanding of modern problems.

To take but one of these: It is a commonplace in library circulation departments that the showing of a film derived from a book, popular or unpopular, will cause a considerable increase in demand for that volume. Corroborating this, Wilfred Eberhart reported that in a study he made of 101 tenth- and eleventh-grade students 82 adolescents had in a year's time read one or more books written by famous nineteenth-century novelists—such as Cooper, Dickens, Eliot, etc.⁴ Those authors whose plots and titles had been used by the film industry were most popular, while Eliot and Thackeray, whose books had not been dramatized, were lowest on the list. Ten Rochester readers of the three-week period were reading fiction for this purpose. One cannot fail to sympathize with the young clerk—a high-school graduate of teen age—who read *Gone with the wind* in February, 1938, with the hope of seeing Clark Gable impersonate Rhett Butler and a year later was still waiting for the film to appear, with or without her favorite silver-sheet actor.

Recreation, a vague hope of increasing general information effortlessly, escape from reality, interest in people in other parts of the country, and the drama of human motives and conduct were the chief forces which sent people to novels. Of these the search for recreation was twice as compelling as the desire for knowledge and almost three times as great as the need for escape or as interest in people.

Poetry.—With poetry, essay, and drama conditions were similar, although here conclusions must be more tentatively reached because of the small number of readers under inspection. Of the twenty-five readers of poetry over half declared their motive to be recreational. Nine explained this by checking the items relating to the sound and imagery of poetic lines. Nine others derived their pleasure from the enriched experience resulting

⁴ "The teaching of literature: an approach to evaluation," *Educational research bulletin*, XVII (1938), 1-6.

from contact with the poetic mind. It was to be expected that the general items—increased vision and deepened understanding which result from reading in general—should accordingly follow. Five persons read poetry only because school assignments demanded it. Four wished to talk about it to other people; and four others sought models for their own verse. No other motives had scores large enough to remove them from the realm of chance.

Essays.—Essays were in demand: first, for school purposes; second, as a recreational device (one man used them to read himself to sleep); and third, as a source of general knowledge. As an instance of the last purpose, a dietitian was reading Della Lutes's *Country kitchen* as preparation for listening to the author lecture at a banquet she expected to attend.

Drama.—From the drama collection a stenographer borrowed Howard's *Paths of glory* because she wished to compare the play with the novel from which it was taken. A salesman turned to Galsworthy's *Strife* to learn a dialogue for an impromptu (*sic*) initiation exercise. Lin Yutang's mention of the medieval Chinese play, *The west chamber*, in a lecture locally given sent the wife of a designer to the library for it. But, for the most part, drama readers declared that school, need for recreation, and the joys of amateur production were the most important reasons for turning to this form of literature. General information, curiosity, and hobby interests completed the list of reliable scores.

In none of the other nine subject fields did recreational reading come first. Desire for information was here in the first rank: general information in the case of biography, travel, philosophy-religion, and sociology; information for school lessons first and background second in the case of history and education; information directed specifically at vocational efficiency in science and business; and information connected with hobbies and avocational occupation in the fine arts.

Biography.—In biography alone of these nine fields did the recreational motive reach second place, 32 per cent of the group checking it. The general desire for the enriching contact with

a keener mind shared third place with the specific wish to know how great people have influenced history (26 per cent each). Almost as many people, however (25 per cent), were curious to know what influences in turn played their parts in shaping the great man's character and acts. Twenty per cent said they wished to transfer the knowledge of the biographee to a better understanding of the living people around them; which may or may not have been the same motive that 19 per cent had in mind when they declared that their reading was to satisfy their curiosity. For 18 per cent the story quality of biography was reason enough for reading this form. And, curiously enough, an identical number regarded biography as a means of keeping up with new ideas and of going back to pick up old ones: each motive was scored by 20 readers.

Librarians frequently lament that their institutions seem overrun at times by citizens hopefully engaged upon the solution of some puzzle or participating in a much publicized contest. Although such a contest was in process at the time of this study, only 11 of the 1,506 readers were using library tools for this purpose and the largest section of those—only three in number—read biography.

Likewise low in the scale were the reading of biography to pass an examination, to help get another job, for study-club programs, to obtain directions for making something, to teach one how to write, for use in remedial education. While 24 readers (19 per cent) confessed that in their desire for information they were impelled by curiosity, only 9 (about 7 per cent) acknowledged this curiosity to be connected with the details of the biographee's private life, and only 6 confessed that their purpose was pornographic. After noting their choice of titles—Casanova; Cleopatra; Mary, Queen of Scots; Benedict Arnold—we are confident that they were not disappointed in their purpose. A reader of Colonel Lawrence's life, however, disclaimed any prurient interest in his private affairs, crossing out the "scandalous" of the item and underlining the "adventure."

Great biographers from Plutarch on have maintained that true biography is history teaching by example and that its

greatest value lies in the application that may be made to our own lives. If this is so, the didactic purpose has only lukewarm interest for the reader. Only 10 per cent of the group checked Item 24 (to find inspiration to live your life more successfully)—it had fifteenth place in the ranks of motives. Curiosity, noble or ignoble, seems more powerful, if one may thus translate the desire expressed for information.

Travel.—In travel it seems not to matter a great deal whether one hopes actually to visit the places he reads about or not—his desire for general information about them applies almost equally in either case. For while 49 per cent of the travel readers declared information to be their goal, 44 per cent indicated interest in people and places regardless of actual contact with them, and 42 per cent said their reading was connected with actual or hoped-for visits there. Among the latter may have been included the 19 per cent who said they read about distant places because they were not able to visit them in person. Indeed, one young Italian woman made this clear by writing in the words "but not instead." Only five readers rejected personal experience in favor of vicarious experience through print, indicating that they thought it more pleasant to read about a country than to visit it. The places they were interested in may explain this somewhat—Africa, Australia, and the Alcazar.

Observing the popularity of such writers as Halliburton, Seabrook, and the Abbe children, to mention only a few, librarians have considered that travel books have a biographical appeal as well—that where the personality of the travel-writer is particularly vivid and likeable, a combination of hero-worship, projection of self, and spirit of adventure make him possess a more powerful attraction for some readers than exact information about a country. Corroborating evidence lies in the scoring of Item 22 (you like a real story, true and yet like a novel) by 28 per cent of the Rochester readers.

Other motives ranking high were the value of seeing the country through a keen man's eyes, the satisfaction of curiosity, the opportunity for escape from surroundings, and the desire to spread international good will by understanding other nations.

From the notes supplied by individual readers we get a glimpse of the dreams and aspirations of travel readers, ranging in a wide arc from the sublime to the ridiculous. There was the college-bred Irish clerk in his thirties who chose Webb Miller's *I found no peace* "to understand and read how other people meet the crisis of life, regardless of place or occasion." And a night-school student in his twenties who declared: "Stamp collectors read travel books because it helps them to locate and understand a place." Most interesting was the reason advanced (because it revealed the reader so clearly) by an assembler, a member of the American Legion, of grade-school training and past his forties, obviously a rolling stone: "Because I travelled myself some, and has a friend whom seen quite a bit of the world, and I want to read more about these places." His choice was J. N. Hall's *Tale of a shipwreck*. The teen-age collegian, keeping in mind the not-far-distant job, wanted to read Erna Ferguson's *Guatemala* because "some day I hope to do field work in the South American countries which are new to botanists and geologists." Equally vocational but not so realistic was the note added by the first-year high-school student who borrowed Grinnell's *By Cheyenne campfires*. He wrote gravely—one can picture with what sober self-dedication—"To prepare for my chosen vocation."

Sociological material.—Sociological material is interesting to our purpose for four reasons: This subject field is one of three in which recreational motives did not appear within the first ten ranks. In only one instance did the ten high ranking motives here dip down from the general statement to the specific—"to know more about the business of government." In this subject also (as in the philosophy-religion field) the teaching motive was higher than in the other fields—it had third place. Finally, sociology was the only subject in which the motive of reading for the sake of proving an argument was found within the first ten ranks. This must not be taken too seriously, though, because it is traceable to the fact that a number of debates were being held in Rochester in February and March and to the fact that debate books on whatever topic were commonly classified as sociology.

Aside from these purposes, in these days of social unrest and political uncertainty men turn to sociological works for general information, to get the point of view of wiser men, to keep up with new ideas, to obtain job efficiency, to pass civil service examinations, to satisfy their curiosity, and to prepare for another job. Of little or no significance in this subject to the group concerned were the examples of friends' reading, study clubs, directions for making something, learning to write, remedial education, personality development, escape from reality, contests, parliamentary procedure, understanding human relations, matters of etiquette, and the ability to handle statistical data. Directly related to this, of course, is the fact that few books circulated on these topics.

Philosophy-religion.—Men read philosophy-religion for general information, too, but the proportion who read for this purpose (44 per cent) is only a little larger than those who read to know what wiser men think (39 per cent), which is as we expected to find it. Nor were we surprised that the teaching motive should be third in rank (28.5 per cent), owing to the strong representation of teachers, ministers, and Sunday school members among the readers. The desire for general information seemed prompted partly by a wish to keep up with new ideas (20 per cent) and partly by a desire to know what other people believe (20 per cent). Here is heartening evidence of a wish to understand one's neighbor and his point of view and creed which, carried far enough, should help to provide a basis of mutual sympathy and respect. The ever present interest in biblical matters which grips a good part of our population undoubtedly put that item next in line, 19 per cent of the group scoring it.

The number of readers (18 per cent) concerned about their own conduct in the solution of daily problems was only slightly smaller than those intelligently (we trust) curious about their neighbors' beliefs. Widely varied are the books from which the former expected the answers to come and from which we gain an insight into the questions that perplexed them: an article in the *Cyclopedia of religion and ethics* on "Prayer and the soul," an article in *Forum* on birth control, Scott's *Religion and com-*

mon sense, the crucifixion chapters from the Bible, Olin Templin's *A guide to thinking*, Latz's *The rhythm*, Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and health*, Oliver Lodge's *Science and human progress*, and others.

Moderately high in the list of motives were: the wish to know why people act as they do (17.5 per cent), the attempt to reconcile religious faith with modern thought (16 per cent), and the need for help in setting up one's personal code (16 per cent)—topics which, in the main, appeal to older readers or to college-trained readers, according to the identification sheets.

Only less significant were the motives lowest in the scale of ranked scores. People do not talk about religious or philosophical books, evidently; or, if they do, the conversation has no sales value. There were no examinations called in the subjects, and they offered no help in preparing for another job. If ministers feel the need of help in writing sermons, biographies, and the like, none turned to the library for the purpose during the period of the study. Only one person checked the numerology-astrology-palmistry item, though librarians occasionally are inclined to think his number is legion and is increasing daily. A delightful bit of human nature came to light when a housewife (a high-school graduate in her twenties) stated that she chose Wolf's *Studies in handreading* for reasons of curiosity and hobby-riding, and, as she added, "also to make a little pin money." However, she did *not* check Item 24 (believe that dreams, lines in the hands, stars or numbers have meaning) which would declare belief in what she sold.

Only two people felt concern over what to teach their children about religion—not enough to remove the scoring from the realm of pure chance—thus indicating that the desire of the larger number to pass along information on the subject was not touched by uncertainty of what to pass along—to their own offspring, at least.

It was evident that an intelligent curiosity, the hope of sharing others' wisdom, and the occasions for giving information to other people were the chief reasons why people read books in the field of philosophy-religion.

Education.—School requirements mounted higher than any other motive in the fields of history and education, 40 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, checking this item. If, however, we make a mental note of the fact that library shelves must therefore be stocked with materials which fit into the curriculums of local institutions, we may pass on to the motives for voluntary reading. General information ranks first in both fields.

In education the quest for general information seemed to be most often directed at learning something about educational systems. Job efficiency and a special phase of that efficiency (handling children and their parents) were next in importance. Following successively came the expectation of acquiring information from contact with a richer mind, need for preparation for another job, necessity of transmitting information to other people, and, in tenth place, the wish to find a desirable school. In all these, except the last, it was the teacher, actual or embryonic, who registered his reading purposes, a not unexpected state of affairs when thirty-two of the fifty-five scorers were teachers and students. Here, obviously, is a field in which teachers read about teaching because they were teachers and hoped to be better ones. At the same time, we wonder where the general reader was, especially the parent (only four housewives were listed here), that he showed no interest in the institution which for eight or twelve years molds the thoughts of his children.

History.—With history readers, the desire for general information was directed first at learning the conditions and people that have made history; next at discovering the social conditions of other times, the historic changes that have occurred and the effect these have had on our own times; and, finally, at determining the progress of civilization. Recreational reading came back into the picture with history—it was seventh in rank. Curiosity and the hope of inspiring contact with a keener intellect completed the first ten places. They show an earnest attempt to interpret the present through understanding the past. As one teen-age Italo-Irish youth put it: "Helps a man

understand himself (ideas, prejudices) by living with people of long ago through books."

Business.—It is only when we come to business, science, and fine arts that we see the urge for background information give way to preference for specific information which bears directly upon vocational efficiency in the case of the first two subjects and upon avocational expertness in the case of the third. It is true that the numbers of individuals checking Items 6 (job efficiency) and 7 (general information) of both business and science are nearly identical, but the increased emphasis on the job in these two fields beyond that in other fields is significant.

On the business form practically all the ten ranking items may be interpreted as the practical consideration of a means of livelihood. The necessity for keeping pace with the times, for rubbing elbows with cleverer businessmen and perhaps absorbing their ideas, for investing safely, for seeing one's way through the economic maze of current conditions—all are plainly indicated by the scores.

There are the eccentrics, of course. A stenographer, college-trained and "forty-past," wanted "to get the facts on the present system of money rackets." And a carpenter—a member of the American Labor party and in his twenties—was reading Karl Marx with the modest intent "to aid the workers and farmers in their struggle against capitalism, to fight fascism, and to defend democracy and to unite the people in a common front against reaction." But, in the main, the readers of business literature were businessmen, salesmen, advertisers, accountants, and investors—all earnestly intent upon reports of business conditions and practice and consistent readers of the better-known financial journals.

Oddly enough, business was the only field in which Item 17 (development of personality and dominance over others) reached the upper third of scores. Whether this was because each of these readers saw himself as a captain of finance bending others to his will, or whether it was a simple realization of the market value of an attractive personality, it would be idle to speculate. There must be some financial connection with its

high score here, since the item ranked only seventeenth in philosophy-religion where Dale Carnegie's followers more logically belong.

Science.—Equally clean-cut was the scoring of the science forms, where the three top ranking motives were identical with those of business: the job, general information, and keeping up with new ideas. The last-named is here practically the same as Item 21 (know about developments in scientific investigation); hence it is not surprising that the two should rank together. Hobbies play a big part in scientific reading, it seems, hobbies which may or may not involve the solution of a technical problem such as is involved in Item 27 (have a technical problem to solve) or the exact formula of Item 22 (need information about a formula, recipe, etc.). Recreational reading is here, too, as is the satisfaction of curiosity. Only the need for inspiration from others has no place in science reading, almost alone of all the factual subject fields.

Fine Arts.—With fine arts materials the needle of reading purpose at the Rochester library dipped definitely in the opposite direction—it was not the job this time which sent men to books; it was the hobby intelligently pursued. Eighty-two per cent of all these readers said they were riding a hobbyhorse that required expertness and skill (the second ranking motive was Item 25, which indicated a desire for improvement in technique and skill). General information entered the list in third place—these were largely the feminine readers, who also helped to bring the recreational motive into line. The scoring between theorists and technicians was close also in Item 14 (directions for making something) and in 21 (understand the quality of an artist's work), with the latter showing a slight advantage.

The great kodak industry and its attendant interest in both professional and amateur photography was the chief reason for the job motive being found in the ten ranking purposes. These readers were mainly the workers responsible for the means whereby the larger proportion had an avocational tool. One is reminded here of Struthers Burt's famous remark about the tourist trade: half the nation working at helping the other half

to travel comfortably, in order to make enough money so that it, too, may travel the next year.

In all the scoring there was evinced the wish of the Rochester readers to participate in, rather than to appreciate passively, artistic activity. Gardeners were numerous, photographers outstanding, musicians many, writers, teachers, inventors, and advertisers in less marked evidence. There was no age limit, as was proved by the eighty-year-old sheet-metal worker whose daughter was borrowing a book of embroidery designs which he could use for embossing designs. On the other hand, the women's club member writing her paper on an art topic more or less familiar was conspicuously missing. Art theory, apparently, is important but not so much so as is art practice.

What, then, of the "drives" which send people to books? It would be an oversimplification of a difficult question to say merely that people believe they read belles-lettres to relax and enjoy themselves; read history and education because their teachers demand it; read sociology, travel, biography, and philosophy-religion because they want to increase their fund of general information; read science and business because they want to make good on their jobs; read fine arts because they have hobbies. In Table 1 is indicated the rank of suggested reading motives in subject fields, as shown by the Rochester study. However, other factors may be present which outweigh subject compulsions. If so, they bear looking into.

DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVES DUE TO SUBJECT, SEX, AND THE MATURITY OF READERS

Inspection of the Rochester data reveals striking differences when motives are isolated which (1) cut across the various subject fields; (2) are important in individual subject fields only; (3) are due to the sex of the readers; or, (4) change as they accompany the reading of materials in one of three levels of literary excellence.

Motives which predominate in the various subject fields.—In the complete list of 134 motives, 2 items stand out from the rest: (1) the desire for general information, and (2) the wish for

recreation. Not only do these claim first rank in more subject fields than do any other items, but they total larger scores than any others within the same subject fields. The first of these,

TABLE 1
RANK OF READING MOTIVES IN SUBJECT FIELDS

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK			
	1	2	3	4
Fiction.....	Recreation	Information	Escape	People in other countries
Poetry.....	Recreation	Like the sound and imagery	New significance to own acts	Contact with keener mind
Essay.....	School assignment	Recreation	Information	Friends' reading
Drama.....	School assignment	Recreation	Amateur production	Information
Biography....	Information	Recreation	Contact with keener mind	Influence of great people
Travel.....	Information	How people in other lands live	Recreation	Personality and adventures of writer
Sociology....	Information	Contact with keener mind	Give information to others	School assignment
Philosophy-religion.....	Information	Contact with keener mind	Give information to others	New ideas
History.....	School assignment	Information	Cause of historical change	How people lived in other times
Education....	School assignment	Information	Today's educational systems	How to handle people
Business.....	Job efficiency	Information	New ideas	Contact with keener mind
Science.....	Job efficiency	Information	New ideas	Scientific developments
Fine arts.....	Hobby	Improve technique or skill	Information	Recreation

"reading to increase one's fund of general information," holds first rank in biography, travel, sociology, and philosophy-religion; and second place in fiction, education, history, business, and science. Only in poetry does it fall as low as sixth place.

In travel practically half (49 per cent) of all the readers scored it. It is the most urgent of all the reasons for reading. Table 2 shows the order in which Rochester men and women ranked "general information" as a reading motive in selected subject fields.

But recreation is important, too. This item takes first rank in fiction and poetry; shares first place with school assignments

TABLE 2*
THE RANK OF "GENERAL INFORMATION" AS A MOTIVE
SUGGESTED BY MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Biography	M and W					
Travel	M	W				
Sociology	M	W				
Philosophy-religion	M		W			
Education	M				W	
Fiction		M and W				
Science		M		W		
History		M				W
Drama		M				
Business		M				
Fine arts		W	M			
Poetry				W		
Essay				W		

* This table is read as follows: The letters "M" and "W" to the right of "biography" and in col. 1 mean that more men and women gave "general information" as a motive for reading biography than any other motive. The letter "W" to the right of "travel" and in col. 2 means that "general information" was mentioned by the second largest number of women as a motive for reading travel. The other letters are read in the same way.

and production hopes in drama; holds second place in essay and biography. In fiction the largest group scoring any item in any subject field—76 per cent—gave it as their reason for choosing that particular form of print. Only in education does it fail to register at all as a reading incentive, though it is comparatively low in sociology and philosophy-religion, also. In Table 3 is shown the order in which Rochester men and women ranked "recreation" as a reading motive in the various subject fields.

Third in importance among all the motives is the involuntary drive which comes from school lessons. In reading essays, education, and history it is the first cause; and it shares that front rank with recreation in the drama. All the thirteen subject fields were somewhat affected by its motivation, travel and fiction being much less so for the period of this investigation

TABLE 3*
THE RANK OF "RECREATION" AS A MOTIVE SUGGESTED
BY MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK														
	I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Fiction.....	M and W														
Poetry.....	W	M													
Essay.....	W														
Drama.....		M	W												
Fine arts....	W							M							
Biography....		W		M											
Travel.....							M and W								
History.....						M	W								
Science.....							M								
Sociology....							M								W
Business....										M					
Philosophy- religion.....											M				
Education....															

* This table is read as follows: The letters "M" and "W" to the right of "fiction" and in col. 1 mean that more men and women gave "recreation" as a motive for reading fiction than any other motive. The letter "M" to the right of "poetry" and in col. 2 means that "recreation" was mentioned by the second largest number of men as a motive for reading poetry. The other letters are read in the same way.

than were any other fields. Table 4 shows the rank of "school assignment" as a motive suggested by men and by women for reading.

Inherent in both recreational and informational reading is the wish to be raised beyond the individual's normal level of thought and action by the wisdom, light, and inspiration which a capable writer can offer. Usually, readers do not regard this motive as a separate end to be attained apart from other purposes. In no complete subject group was it marked first. The thought of sharing another's superior vision and opportunities

accompanies other purposes so frequently, however, whether these be informational or recreational, that readers in practically all subject fields scored Item 18 generously. This motive had second rank in sociology and philosophy-religion; shared third place in biography; ranked fourth in fields as widely differing as poetry and business, and sixth in fiction, travel, and

TABLE 4*
THE RANK OF "SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT" AS A MOTIVE SUGGESTED
BY MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK																			
	I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
History.....	M and W																			
Essay.....	M			W																
Drama.....		M	W																	
Education....	W	M																		
Science.....	W																			
Business.....	W													M						
Sociology....				W					M					M						
Biography....			W									M								
Poetry.....						W														
Fine arts....								W											M	
Philosophy- religion....								W												M
Fiction.....															W					M
Travel.....																	M and W			

* This table is read as follows: The letters "M" and "W" to the right of "history" and in col. 1 mean that more men and women gave "school assignment" as a motive for reading fiction than any other motive. The letter "M" to the right of "drama" and in col. 2 means that "school assignment" was mentioned by the second largest number of men as a motive for reading drama. The other letters are read in the same way.

education; dropped to ninth place in history and to twelfth in science and fine arts. Readers scoring the item comprised from 39 per cent of the philosophy-religion group to 12 per cent of the history and science groups. Table 5 shows the rank of "contact with keener mind" as a motive suggested by men and by women for reading.

The second fact of consequence established by the data is that certain motives will rank high in one or two fields but are not strong incentives in the remaining subjects. For example, reading to pass an examination was extensive enough in sociol-

ogy to cause the item to hold fifth place—but that was because of civil service examinations in the offing. The purpose showed in only three other subject fields—fiction, history, and business—and there only to a slight degree. So, too, with the item specifying directions for making something. In fine arts this was evidently a genuine need; the item ranked sixth. In science

TABLE 5*

THE RANK OF "CONTACT WITH KEENER MIND" AS A MOTIVE SUGGESTED
BY MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Philosophy-religion.....	W	M															
Sociology.....		M				W											
Biography.....		M							W								
Poetry.....			W		M												
Travel.....				M													
Education.....				M													
Business.....				M													
Essay.....				W													
Fiction.....					M		W										
Drama.....					M				W								
History.....									M								
Fine arts.....												M					W
Science.....																	

* This table is read as follows: The letter "W" to the right of "philosophy-religion" and in col. 1 means that more women gave "contact with keener mind" as a motive for reading philosophy-religion than any other motive. The other letters are read in the same way.

it also appeared, but here it ranked eleventh. In the remaining four subjects where it appeared at all it fell below the twentieth place.

A great deal of thought has been devoted by the library world during the past decade to the problem of adult education and the opportunity which the library offers for continuing informal education and for repairing gaps in earlier formal schooling. There is some evidence from the scoring of the item, "to make up for lacks in your schooling," that the interest and concern are one-sided and that the reader does not share them

deeply. The item was checked occasionally in nine fields, but of these only business ranked it as high as twelfth place.

Entering more fields, but not strong in any, was Item 17 (the desire to develop one's personality and to influence others). People read in ten fields for this reason but only in business was it a major motive. Here it had eighth place. In education it was eleventh. In other subjects it ranked from twelfth to

TABLE 6*

THE RANK OF "PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT" AS A MOTIVE
SUGGESTED BY MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK														
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Business.....	M														
Fiction.....				W											
Sociology.....						M									
Travel.....								M							
Philosophy- religion.....										M					
Biography.....									W	M					
History.....									M						
Science.....															
Fine arts.....												M			
Poetry.....													M		
Essay.....															
Drama.....															
Education.....															

* This table is read as follows: The letter "M" to the right of "business" and under 7 means that "personality development" was mentioned by the seventh largest number of men as a motive for reading business literature. The letter "W" to the right of "fiction" and under 10 means that "personality development" was mentioned by the tenth largest number of women as a motive for reading business literature. The other letters are read in the same way.

twenty-second. Table 6 shows how the Rochester men and women ranked "personality development" as a motive for reading in the various subject fields.

One of the commonest motives popularly ascribed to reading is "escape." The Rochester data confirmed this for the field of fiction, where that motive had third place. And in travel it reached eighth place, but, recalling the would-be policeman who checked it as a reason for his taking the civil service examinations, one wonders how many of the travel readers likewise took

the getting-away literally. Escape appeared as a minor motive in six other fields, hovering around twentieth place in each. Table 7 shows the rank of "escape" in various subject fields.

Curiosity, too, is generally recognized as a moving force in the learning process. It appeared as a reading motive in all the fields where the number of Rochester readers is safe for generalization and in one where it is not. In the latter instance—

TABLE 7*
THE RANK OF "ESCAPE" AS A MOTIVE SUGGESTED BY
MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK																			
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
Fiction.....	M	W																		
Travel.....			W			M														
Biography.....												W	M							
Philosophy-religion.....															M					
History.....															M					
Science.....															M					
Fine arts.....													W				M			
Poetry.....																				
Essay.....																				
Drama.....																				
Education.....																				
Business.....																				
Sociology.....																				

* This table is read as follows: The letter "M" to the right of "fiction" and under 4 means that "escape" was mentioned by the fourth largest number of men as a motive for reading fiction. The letter "W" to the right of "fiction" and under 5 means that "escape" was mentioned by the fifth largest number of women as a motive for reading fiction. The other letters are read in the same way.

drama—it reached its highest rank, a not very trustworthy place, however. It was seventh for travel, eighth for biography and science, ninth for history, tenth for business, and eleventh for fiction and fine arts. It must be taken into consideration wherever reading motives are reckoned with. Table 8 shows the rank of "curiosity" as a motive for reading in various subject fields.

At the beginning of the recent period of economic stress a recurrent claim for library effectiveness appeared throughout

the professional apologias: reading would help to fit the individual for another job. Readers of business literature apparently regard this as true; they put the motive in fifth place. Educational readers turn to books with this hope, too; they put it in eighth place. In sociology (the civil service examinations again!) it reached tenth rank; and in science and fine arts,

TABLE 8*
THE RANK OF "CURIOSITY" AS A MOTIVE SUGGESTED BY
MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK									
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sociology.....	M				W					
Biography.....		M and W								
Travel.....		M and W								
Fine arts.....		W						M		
Philosophy-religion.....			W			M				
Science.....			M							
History.....					M					
Business.....				M						
Fiction.....					M			W		
Poetry.....										
Essay.....										
Drama.....										
Education.....										

* This table is read as follows: The letter "M" to the right of "sociology" and in col. 1 means that "curiosity" was mentioned by the sixth largest number of men as a motive for reading sociology. The letters "M" and "W" to the right of "biography" and in col. 2 mean that "curiosity" was mentioned by the seventh largest number of men and women as a motive for reading sociology. The other letters are read in the same way.

thirteenth. Nowhere else was it important, though enough wishful thinking fiction readers checked it to make it twenty-third in that field.

Another easily perceptible advantage claimed for reading is that it enables the reader to keep up with new ideas. Business and science readers echoed that claim emphatically—they ranked the motive third in each case. More surprising, perhaps, is the fourth place in which philosophy-religion readers put it. In sociology, education, fiction, fine arts, biography, travel, and history it wandered from fifth to fourteenth place.

Table 9 shows the rank of "keeping up with new ideas" as a motive for reading in various subjects.

Finally, there were two items which reached first rank in one or two specific subject fields, and dropped out of sight in others. The job motive, as seen earlier, was of first importance in business and science. It may be completely disregarded in belles-

TABLE 9*

THE RANK OF "KEEPING UP WITH NEW IDEAS" AS A MOTIVE
SUGGESTED BY MEN AND BY WOMEN FOR READING

SUBJECT FIELD	RANK																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Science.....		W	M																	
Business.....			M																	
Fine arts.....						W			M											
Education.....					W															
Sociology.....						W	M													
Philosophy-religion.....						M														
Fiction.....							W	M												
Biography.....								M			W									
Travel.....												M					W			
History.....												M								
Essay.....																				
Drama.....																				
Poetry.....																				

* This table is read as follows: The letter "W" to the right of "science" and in col. 2 means that "keeping up with new ideas" was mentioned by the second largest number of women as a motive for reading science literature. The letter "M" to the right of "science" and in col. 3 means that "keeping up with new ideas" was mentioned by the third largest number of men as a motive for reading science literature. The other letters are read in the same way.

lettres. But for fine arts, education, and sociology it was of definite—though not primary—importance, holding seventh, fifth, and sixth places, respectively. The hobby motive rose to first rank in fine arts; it dropped out of sight in education, essay, and poetry; was almost as slight for philosophy-religion and sociology; had an equivocal position for fiction, travel, history, and business; and a very dubious ranking in drama. In science, however, it jumped back to fifth place. It can be considered truly important in only two fields, therefore.

The power of example, the desire to know and to do what

one's friends do, the advertising by word of mouth—all inherent in Item 5 (to read the books your friends talk about)—were considered weighty only in the case of fiction. This motive reached seventh place in fiction; in the other four fields where it was scored at all it fell to the twentieth place or lower.

Least effective of the twenty general items listed for all the subject fields was the puzzle-contest motive. In no field was the score large enough to be considered significant. It is understood that these interests are episodic and are due, in most cases, to no innate interest in the subject but to the hope of winning the pretentious prizes offered by advertisers. If our investigation had been made at another time of year the number of contestants might have been slightly larger or even smaller than it was.

Almost as negligible was the motive of keeping up with one's study club. Rochester readers of fiction, sociology, philosophy-religion, and history checked this item, but so infrequently as to rank it in twenty-fifth, twenty-fourth, and eighteenth places. In the unequal scoring of such items as recreation and information, on the one hand, and of puzzle-working and study-club assignments, on the other, we have demonstrated a clean-cut distinction in the two kinds of reading compulsions which are fundamentally unlike. The nature of these differences will be considered later.

Sex differences in reading motives.—One of the first details which close inspection of the data reveals is that among readers of belles-lettres women are in the majority whereas men make up the greater part of the factual readers. Within each of these fields certain differences showed which might be ascribed to the sex of the readers rather than to the subject read.

It was observed that Rochester women (1) read more often for recreational and theoretic purposes than did Rochester men, though for both sexes recreation was the most important reason for reading fiction; (2) used books more often for school assignments than did men; (3) were more susceptible to the fact that other people were reading and talking about certain books than

were men; and (4) turned to books for escape more frequently than did men.

Men, on the other hand, (1) used books to increase their fund of general information in more fields than did women; (2) were

TABLE 10

THE RANK ORDER OF THE VARIOUS OCCASIONS AS ASSIGNED
BY MEN AND BY WOMEN READERS

OCCASIONS	MEN ($N=859$)		WOMEN ($N=605$)	
	Rank*	Score	Rank*	Score
General knowledge.....	1	358	2	177
Recreation.....	2	205	1	230
Job efficiency.....	3	202	11	55
Contact with richer mind.....	4	183	4	100
New ideas.....	5	178	5	97
Curiosity.....	6	135	6	78
Hobby.....	7	134	10	60
Preparation for another job.....	8	101	17	13
Develop personality.....	9	88	12.5	46
Gaps in education.....	10	80	14	33
Information to others.....	11	79	8	70
Escape.....	12	76	7	77
School assignment.....	13	75	3	139
Directions to make something.....	14	70	15	23
Prove an opinion.....	15	60	12.5	46
Pass an examination.....	16	35	20	7
Friends' reading.....	17	22	9	66
Study club.....	18	15	16	14
Learn to write.....	19	12	18	10
Contest or puzzle.....	20	2	19	9

* Spearman Footrule $R = .50$.

more often prompted in their reading by motives connected with the job, either advancement in the present occupation or finding another job; (3) were somewhat more susceptible to the theory that books may help in developing personality and in repairing gaps in one's early schooling. Table 10 presents the rank order of the various occasions for reading as assigned by men and women readers.

Differences in motives due to education and literary discrimination.—No evidence was found in the Rochester data for the belief that purposes change from one stage of scholastic advancement to another, as has been advanced.⁵ There is more reason to believe that certain purposes fluctuate with the reading experience and maturity of the individual, with the discrimination and critical ability he possesses. These, of course, may show more plainly in readers of increased educational opportunity, but sometimes readers with little formal education possess them as well.

Table 11 shows the rank order of the various motives as assigned by men and women readers of fiction when the titles of the books chosen were arranged according to three rather subjective levels of excellence. Men readers of the "superior" type of fiction were sent to books with the initial hope of taking advantage of the author's riper wisdom—practically the only instance of that item's ranking first. Readers of the two lower masculine groups and all women readers put recreation first.

All six groups used books as a means of escape, but the male readers of the least sophisticated type put the item in second place, next in importance to recreation. Unsophisticated readers of both sexes enjoyed the story element in fiction—the thrill and suspense of the plot unfolding—to a greater degree than did the readers of the more sophisticated groups.

Women readers of all three groups attached greater importance to following friends' examples in reading, and the readers who chose the finest type of literature put this motive highest, making it share first place with recreation.

The data obtained from the three avenues of approach just described rest upon practically the same techniques as have other investigations, i.e., frequency counts of readers' scores. But before too much dependence is placed upon such judgments it must be accepted that (1) the motives checked are discreet

⁵ Mabel Snedaker and Ernest Horn, "Reading in the various fields of the curriculum," in National Society for the Study of Education, *Thirty-sixth yearbook*, Part I (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing, 1937), p. 137.

TABLE 11*

RANK ORDER OF THE VARIOUS MOTIVES AS ASSIGNED BY MEN AND WOMEN
READERS OF FICTION WHEN THE FICTION TITLES READ ARE GROUPED
INTO THREE CLASSES: SUPERIOR, MEDIUM, AND INFERIOR

MOTIVE	RANK					
	Men			Women		
	Superior	Medium	Inferior	Superior	Medium	Inferior
School assignment.....	2	2	.....	5	4	3
Recreation.....	33	17	3	64	40	10
Curiosity.....	9	.....	2	6	5	7
New ideas.....	8	1	1	14	15	3
Friends' reading.....	6	2	2	21	12	10
Job efficiency.....	3	1	1	5	2	1
Information.....	17	6	3	23	25	8
Hobby.....	6	.....	.....	10	2	.....
Examination.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....
Get new job.....	2	.....	.....	1	2	.....
Study club.....	1	.....	.....	2	.....	1
Prove opinion.....	4	.....	1	5	2	.....
Tell others.....	2	1	.....	2	1	.....
Directions.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Learn to write.....	.....	1	.....	1	3	.....
Adult education.....	3	.....	1	6	3	3
Personality.....	3	2	2	5	5	5
Rich contacts.....	10	3	4	12	14	5
Escape.....	20	2	2	18	8	5
Puzzle or contest.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	1
Vicarious experience.....	7	.....	.....	12	2	.....
Suspense.....	13	1	.....	14	4	2
Life problems.....	2	.....	.....	8	3	1
Historical scene.....	11	5	1	11	14	5
Foreign places.....	14	5	2	15	15	3
Human motives.....	8	2	2	20	16	9
Saw the movie.....	8	2	.....	6	.....	.....
Modern problems.....	7	.....	2	6	9	3
N.....	41	22	6	73	56	16

SPEARMAN FOOTRULE R

Men	Women	Men and Women
1st-2d level, $R = .39$	1st-2d level, $R = .57$	1st level, $R = .60$
2d-3d level, $R = .46$	2d-3d level, $R = .62$	2d level, $R = .49$
1st-3d level, $R = .48$	1st-3d level, $R = .45$	3d level, $R = .62$

* This table is read as follows: The figure 2 to the right of "school assignment" and in col. 1 under "superior" means that of the men reading fiction classed as superior the second largest number gave "school assignment" as the motive for reading that fiction. The figure 2 in col. 2 to the right of "school assignment" and under "medium" means that of the men reading fiction titles classed as medium, the second largest number gave "school assignment" as the motive for reading that fiction. The other numbers are read in the same way.

and mutually exclusive; (2) only one motive affects the reading of any single book; and (3) the reader can always determine which motive has influenced him.

FACTORS PREVENTING READERS FROM COMPLETE IDENTIFICATION OF THEIR READING MOTIVES

The multiplicity of motives attached to the reading act.—Even the most casual inspection of the data reveals that the assumption of single purpose in reading is fallacious. The majority of the readers checked not one but several motives for reading their books. In one case a reader indicated fourteen different reasons, all of them probably genuine, as her explanation substantiates.

It is a true defect of this study that the people who cooperated in it were not asked to show primary and secondary causes for wishing to read the material they borrowed. Case study and individual interviews were not feasible. Moreover, they might have involved incorrect interpretation.

From the data which the Rochester readers did return two confident judgments may be derived: (1) The act of reading in most instances is based upon a desire to achieve several satisfactions. (2) There exists a fundamental difference between the satisfactions which are desired and the occasions which prompt those desires. Both of these points may be elaborated and illustrated.

Among the numerous antithetical expressions in the English language few connote contrast to the average mind more meaningfully than the phrase "work and play." It occurs in all phases of human activity, in the educational world no less than any other. When applying the term to the reading act, educators are likely to use it particularly to contrast reading for recreation with reading for information—activities they regard as fundamentally opposed. The most superficial examination, nevertheless, shows that the distinction is not a real one, since one idea does not exclude the other and both may be present in the same act. The information gained from reading for information may give the keenest pleasure to the reader and afford

him relaxation as well; while reading for the single purpose of the enjoyment to be derived thereby must necessarily involve the acquisition of some information, even though the information be false and the mind take no action on the thing learned.

For example, in the field of fine arts twenty people in Rochester said they wished to read the material they borrowed because they wanted to know about the theory and products of certain schools and periods of art. This entailed the acquiring of special information for specific purposes. Of these twenty only one failed to check also both the recreational and the general informational items, which are general motives extending through all the subject fields.

If, then, we are unable to set aside into separate compartments two so-called opposite purposes in reading, how much less success may we expect with purposes which admittedly parallel or modify each other. To illustrate: About 20 per cent of all the returns indicated that the reading motive of the Rochester library patrons was to increase their vision and to deepen their understanding by contact with a richer mind. Many of these readers were also in the larger group (36 per cent of all the readers) who indicated that their purpose was to gain general information, regardless of the source or how gained. Again: In the subject group with the largest number of readers participating—fiction—escape was the purpose which ranked below only recreation and general information. Seventy of the 260 readers said escape was their reason for enjoying a novel; and only 6 of these did not check also either the recreational or the informational items, or both. Only 1 of the 6 checked the escape item alone. Fourth place in the fiction field was held by the item relating to reading about people in other places—69 individuals, or 21 per cent of the group, checked it. Only 2 of these checked the item alone, and only 6 checked it who did not also score recreation and/or information. Fifth place was held by Item 26, covering the satisfactions derived from reading about human motives and conduct in fiction; only 2 of the 64 readers said they had no other motives in reading the novels.

The ready suspicion may arise that the motives listed were not sufficiently distinguishable to result in true reporting by the readers; or that they were not even true motives but rather rationalizations on the part of the investigator. Counterpoise to this doubt is the fact that (1) librarians in daily contact with readers the country over had recorded most of the items as purposes which sent their patrons to the library for books; (2) from pulpit, press, and school have issued for a long period exhortations to people to read, which have stressed not one but many benefits to be derived; (3) the individual's own experience includes many instances where reading undertaken for a single purpose resulted in several subsidiary satisfactions. The overlapping observed in the scoring is more probably only that which is inherent in the reading act itself and therefore inescapable.

So in any form of recreational reading pursued with the main intention of enjoyment, there will inevitably be an accompaniment of information and, almost as inevitably, of several other by-products as well, depending upon the particular type of book which has value in the reader's eyes. D. C. Griffiths clarifies this process somewhat in his comment on what goes on in the reader's mind as he reads *Kim*, when he "absorbs" information about a fact in which he is not primarily interested:

Though I am interested in India, and willing to learn more about the life of its people, I read *Kim*, not for this reason, but because it is a good story. My curiosity is only part of a general desire to know more of experience beyond the limits of my own environment. While and after reading *Kim*, I imagine, more clearly than before, the hubbub of an Eastern bazaar; it appears . . . as if I were present at that strange place, as if I, as well as Kim, could see and hear what was going on. I am, therefore, gratified mostly because I enjoy the story and feel sympathy with Kim's independence, but also because I feel that my range of experience has been widened.⁶

We conclude with this author that a reader probably turns to a novel with the main purpose of recreation in mind, but that the reading often involves many rich by-products which he

⁶ *The psychology of literary appreciation: a study in psychology and education* ("Educational research series," No. 13 [Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1932]), pp. 19-20.

willingly accepts and, though none may have been his original incentive for reading, all combine to form the thing which provides the enjoyment.

This should not lead to the conclusion that there were no Rochester readers who scored single items. If temporarily we disregard the school-assignment motive, we find readers in each field, ranging from 17 per cent in philosophy-religion to 37 per cent in education, who registered only one motive. The items most heavily scored by these single-purpose readers were: for fiction, recreation; for biography, general information; for travel, the visit, past or future, to strange countries; for history, giving information to others; for sociology, general information and passing of examinations; for philosophy-religion, job efficiency (largely by ministers and salesmen) and giving information to others; for education, giving information to others; for business, job efficiency; for science, job efficiency; for fine arts, the hobby. In six of these ten classes the dominating motive of the single-purpose readers was that of the multiple-choice readers also; in two of the remaining classes occupational interests were plainly visible. It is possible that these readers, having indicated their primary purposes, were not sufficiently interested or analytic to say wherein other satisfactions lay.

This goes far toward establishing confidence in the final scores earlier totaled for the items, but even more strongly the multiple choice of the majority of the readers points to the conviction that it is not possible to count motives as one does the temperature degrees etched on a thermometer nor to say of one purpose that it is twice as strong as another, since one may be implicit in the other. Hatfield⁷ ventured the opinion that the blending of reading motives into one another is like the colors of the spectrum or of the sunset. But motives are hardly so evenly blended and so easily discernible as the colors of the spectrum; nor is the sunset analogy more faithful. It might be said with more exactness and truth that the blending of reading motives resembles the mountain parks in which many species of flowers run riot, some in profusion, others in solitary state,

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 100.

with here and there a clump of one species making a single spot of color in the landscape.

The occasions for reading.—Even greater difficulty was experienced by the Rochester readers in distinguishing between the occasions which had sent them to books and the satisfactions which they expected to derive from the reading. The two are not identical but play roles of cause and effect. They are not of equal “drive”; under some circumstances the occasion is stronger than the satisfaction sought; under others, the satisfaction may be so imperative as to create its own occasion. One is an external of time, place, or individual circumstance; the other is a universal tendency, an inner urge or compulsion. The one may be so special and limited that no other literate person would be moved by it; the other is a craving to which all more or less respond.

Every librarian and bookseller can cite instance after instance of the impetus given to reading because the weather turns disagreeable, because a radio broadcast is unexpectedly convincing and terrifying, because a title is carelessly or purposely mentioned in a lecture, because a romantic prince abdicates his throne, or because a helpless country is annexed by a stronger state. They can point not to one but to several individuals whose reading is occasioned by physical disability, personality defect, or poor economic status—persons who turn to reading to compensate for the satisfactions denied them in everyday life.

These are somewhat common in all library experience, but the individual occasion may be unique to the stage of absurdity, as the letter published in the March 26, 1938, issue of the *Publishers' weekly* indicates. It read, in part:

Fellow walked in and said “I want that book” and pointed to the new Random House edition of “Hajji Baba.” As he wrote his check for \$3.50 he said, “You know I never read. I’m getting this book for my 16-month-old baby. Years ago I decided if I ever had a kid I’d never name him Joe or John or any common name like that. So I called my kid Taj. That book has a picture on the cover that looks like the Taj Mahal and I want to show the kid so he’ll know what he’s named after.”⁸

⁸ P. 1376.

In the list of items submitted to the Rochester readers a few of the more common occasions were included to illustrate this double phase of motivation when, in the opinion of the validating librarians, they were encountered often enough at the library desk to be taken into serious account. Beyond this it was not feasible to go, because to carry the identification of an individual occasion to its narrowest extreme is to limit it almost entirely to the person of whom it is true. However, the readers were invited to append to the list any motive not included which was true of the individual's own case.

Of the first 20 general items printed on all the 13 subject forms, 5 were unmistakably occasions for reading: school assignments, passing examinations, study-club reading, passing information along to others, and puzzle-contest reading. All are personal rather than political or cosmic in circumstance. Two other motives—proving an opinion and escape—are open to interpretation as either occasion of or satisfaction from reading, depending upon the intent of the individual reader. In the special motives limited to one subject only there were 22 occasions in the 13 groups: 1 each in fiction, essay, biography, sociology, philosophy-religion, education, travel, science; 2 in drama; 3 in fine arts; 4 in poetry; 5 in business; and none in history.

In each of these items of occasion we should rightfully expect that the number of readers checking it would be considerably smaller than the number checking items which represent universal satisfactions. And this was true of the two major satisfactions—recreation and general information—and of other satisfactions as well as in the total scores throughout the subject fields. Only the school assignment proved important in most of these, but other occasions ranked high in one or two subject fields though they sank out of sight in the rest. Some of the occasions were responsible also for the single scores that were checked by from 17 to 37 per cent of the readers in the various fields, especially by those checking the school assignment, the examination, the giving of information to others, the contest, and the debate items—little if any interest was betrayed in the information itself. But where the occasion was peculiar to one

field only, e.g., the moving-picture item in fiction, it seldom represented a single check by the reader. Here it was a clear incentive for plainly indicated satisfactions. Table 12 shows the

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGE OF ALL READERS IN GENERAL AND IN SPECIAL
SUBJECT FIELDS MENTIONING VARIOUS OCCASIONS
FOR READING

Subject Field	Occasions	Percentage
General.....	School assignment	20.32
General.....	Give information to others	11.55
General.....	Escape	8.19
General.....	Prove/disprove an opinion	6.50
General.....	Pass an examination	2.41
General.....	Keep up with study club	1.92
General.....	Enter contest-work puzzle	.51
Drama.....	Member of a theater group	28.00*
Poetry.....	Write poetry	24.00*
Business.....	Want to invest money	18.00
Science.....	Solve a technical problem	17.00
Education.....	Choose a school	11.00
Fine arts.....	Want new ideas for design	11.00
Fiction.....	Saw story in movies or theater	9.52
Travel.....	Establish a business elsewhere	8.00
Drama.....	Saw play at movies or theater	6.89*
Biography.....	Read the subject's book	6.79
Business.....	Locate new markets	6.67
Business.....	Open a new business	5.92
Fine arts.....	Follow a score at a concert	4.00
Poetry.....	Put a poem to music	4.00*
Poetry.....	For entertainment	4.00*
Poetry.....	Heard poem over radio	4.00*
Business.....	Prepare advertising copy	3.70
Business.....	Set up a special account	2.22
Sociology.....	Prepare for citizenship	2.68
Philosophy-religion....	Believe in dreams, stars, etc.	1.00
Essay.....	Essays are short	0.00
Fine arts.....	Give a party or entertainment	0.00

* The number of readers in drama and in poetry was so small as to make doubtful these percentages.

percentage of all readers in general and in special subjects mentioning various occasions for reading.

Most of the occasions for reading—the school world apart—applied to a relatively small number of readers, in many cases

to only one. However, since they sometimes take their origin from social milieu and group pressure as well as from personal exigencies, any occurrence known to or affecting a large number of persons may induce a craving for similar satisfactions in a large proportion of these. The occasions for reading may, therefore, be very important for the librarian's consideration.

The satisfactions of reading.—Prompted by these occasions and proximate causes, the Rochester readers turned to books, as is indicated by the items they checked and the other items they appended, in search of two major and overlapping satisfactions—for information and for recreation. Each has its own forms of gratification. In search of the first of these—information—were such readers, on the one hand, as a boy with car repairs to make, a woman with a vase to sell, a physician who needed the address of a lawyer-acquaintance in another city; and on the other, a larger number who made such general statements as: "I am a young bride and feel I should know more about life," "To attempt to find the meaning of life—if there be one," and "To enlarge one's information about a subject he is interested in."

It is evident that two distinct types of information acquisition may be observed: (1) information based on a limited, specific, and recognizable purpose usually practical, which may or may not recur; and (2) information based on a conviction that reading is a valuable experience which results in a body of general knowledge that can be drawn on as future occasion demands. The readers for specific information, it is also clear, are largely conditioned by the immediate occasions which prompt them. They are strongly represented among those who checked only one item. If they constituted the whole of the reading population, the problem of uncovering reading motives would be simple.

Far more common, it is thought, is reading for the purpose of acquiring general information which, though directed at no immediate need, satisfies curiosity, gratifies the desire for self-improvement, panders to the hope of knowing as much as one's fellows, and indulges one's interest in himself. A feeling of secur-

ity and sufficiency is engendered thereby which a single disappointing experience does not destroy (as it can the satisfaction of the seeker for specific information); for if one satisfaction be lacking in the book, others may take its place. If none should be present, earlier experiences were more fruitful, so the contact with books is not terminated. Such reading may be planned or desultory, long range or incidental, limited in scope or embracing all fields of knowledge. With the Rochester readers the acquisition of general information was the item most often paralleling the major purpose where it did not itself outrank all others.

In some respects the need for general information is similar to that for recreation. Both go back to man's psychological nature—to his reactions to acts, situations, and objects in his life experiences. These reactions psychologists of another generation called instincts and emotions. Today we hear of "emotional tendencies," "wishes," or "dependable motives." Thus Thomas and Znaniecki, describing, it is true, a very limited group—the Polish peasant—speak of four "wishes" which they believe condition their subjects' social and personal reactions:

(1) the desire for new experience, for fresh stimulations; (2) the desire for recognition, including, for example, sexual response and general social appreciation, and secured by devices ranging from the display of ornament to the demonstration of worth through scientific attainment; (3) the desire for mastery, or the "will to power," exemplified by ownership, domestic tyranny, political despotism, based on the instinct of hate, but capable of being sublimated to laudable ambition; (4) the desire for security, based on the instinct of fear and exemplified negatively by the wretchedness of the individual in perpetual solitude or under social taboo.⁹

The reading act is related to these desires; the same "drives" condition individuals who turn to books searching for satisfactions denied them elsewhere. First of these is the capacity and urge to learn. In satisfying this the book contributes a larger share than does any other agency. In fact, since man left the primitive state the book has been synonymous with the learning act, as being an economic and convenient device providing

⁹ W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Knopf, 1927), I, 73.

a scope and range of information impossible from any other medium. Man's first purpose in turning to it is to be informed.

Nature has endowed man with a whip to flog him along this path of learning—the Polish “desire for recognition.” In the reading act it takes the form of reading toward improvement on the job, advancement in position and power; at other times, it is an attempt to remedy, by reading, conditions which put the individual at a disadvantage before others and so to bolster up his sense of worth.

Man is also provided with emotional responses to fit the occasions in his life when terror, rage, laughter, love, and sympathy for others move him. But the occasions in his life when certain of these emotions are aroused are not sufficiently numerous to satisfy him, so he looks about for situations outside himself with which to identify himself and feed his feeling of self-sufficiency and mastery. The satisfaction of experiencing at second hand the actions and successes of fictitious characters supplies the thrill he vainly seeks from reality. The principal fabric of which cinema plot, novel, poem, biography, or travel account is made is the puppet man subduing other puppets or nature—loving, fighting, greatly daring, and inevitably conquering. In the puppet's actions the reader sees his own; in the manikin's emotional debauch he indulges himself.

Involved in this emotional titillation is the desire for information, too—emotional information which can be stored away against such time as the real emotion may be awakened in the reader. “What does it feel like to lose one close and dear?” we ask, and we observe the puppet's reactions. “What must be a man's thoughts when he wins against heavy odds to the goal he has set?” “How do parents think and feel when their children come to disgrace?” It is not factual information that is wanted but the effect of these upon the individuals' emotions. Conceivably the reader may be in these people's places sometime, so he reads about them now without any immediate or specific need in mind. The part that emotional need plays in the reading act and the times it is responsible for the reader's vague statement, “Because I think the book is interesting,” cannot be overem-

phasized. The younger and more naïve the reader the greater his general desire to know, because the more restricted his life experience. As life, observation, or reading brings the answers, the circle of his emotional-informational needs gradually closes, and the number of new experiences possible vicariously becomes smaller and smaller. And so he arrives at a stage when novel, play, or life holds few if any new emotional observations. Before that can happen, however, a depth of emotional understanding will have been plumbed which would be quite impossible in real-life experience.

A less powerful response, but one nevertheless easily discernible, is man's use of reading for purposes of relaxation and escape. In the latter, we have a temporary mental expedient employed during time of stress (probably because reading is a habitual act with that individual) which fades into other motives when the period is over. In the former, we find rather escape from muscular exertion or retreat from human kind or from impacts of other personalities which drain nervous energy from the individual. Here the tired mind and wearied body recover strength, poise, and sanity after an hour or two of reading. This is directly in line with a basic urge toward change, a change which discharges tension, to which many psychologists call attention. Hobbies, corresponding to man's urge to play, represent another form of this tendency, although there is likely to be involved here an active co-operation of intellect and muscles which is not characteristic of relaxation as such. Hobby-reading also touches upon the mastery tendency. More than any other, perhaps, this trait illustrates the multiple tendencies which a single reading act may imply.

In addition to the two primal urges for information and recreation, it is usually accepted that there is an aesthetic and an intellectual satisfaction to be obtained in reading. Aesthetic pleasure is thought to be concerned with the enjoyment of beautiful sound, of combinations of words, of the images evoked by both. It calls for an appreciation of the balanced phrase, the use of sonorous or lilting words, the magnificent sweep of an idea through its development to its climax—not for the logic displayed but for sheer beauty of thought and structure. It de-

mands a pleased recognition of the original and unstereotyped figure of speech and allusion such as comes when the reader, stalking heavily through Mellen's uninspired verse, is surprised by the line: "High over all the lonely bugle grieves."

In aesthetic appreciation, as in intellectual appreciation, an element enters which is antithetical to the reading purposes earlier considered. In reading for information or emotional excitement the reader projects himself into the text and takes an active part in the development of the theme, perhaps as a result of his tendency to self-assertion. But in aesthetic enjoyment he remains on the side lines and praises the beauty of the concept, while his intellect applauds the craftsmanship by which the effect was produced.

The essence of the intellectual satisfaction derived is exercise of the critical faculty. Thus some readers, at the same time that they are satisfying their curiosity or arousing their emotions, are keenly alert to the logic displayed by the writer in developing his thesis. The pleasure so obtained is a thing apart from the information, and the development of such pleasure in the reader is a much later growth than any of the others, including aesthetics. It develops unequally in individuals, depending probably upon their intellectual powers, training, and reading experience. Some never read for this purpose.

Occasions apart, it is evident that the broadest classification possible of the satisfactions derived from reading (and therefore of the motives for such reading) involves four phases: information, recreation, aesthetics, and critical appreciation. Two of these, information and recreation, illustrate man's propensity to experience vicariously what he cannot or will not achieve in real life. The other two satisfactions arise from a consideration of the success with which this vicarious experience is presented for his enrichment and enjoyment. The latter are not identified in the Rochester data, except as their presence is implied in the ranking of readers in the third level of fiction materials read. But, as was brought out earlier, broad classifications help the librarian but little. What is needed is such minute description as will put the unknown reader into his category unmistakably. Hence minor pleasures, the various kinds of satisfactions, and a

great deal of exact information about the reader must be known, too. This involves, however, a degree of self-analysis and the establishment of numerous psychological factors which are difficult for the ordinary reader to supply about himself.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The review of the Rochester data and of the psychological theories regarding motives for reading supports the initial assumption of this study: That whenever a reader comes to the library "for something to read" it is well to ask why he wants it. A score of people asking for the same sort of material will want it for as many purposes and will need as many different treatments of the subject to suit them. One man may want a book for a half-dozen different reasons. Or the same reader may use the same magazine or book in different ways at different times.

As far as the individual is a typical member of his group, certain generalizations may be confidently made about his reading motives. For example, examination of the most heavily scored items in the various subject fields shows a definite correspondence between subject matter and the primary purpose in the groups reading about the subject. It is evident that fiction is read by most Rochester people for recreation; fine arts for hobby-riding; and business and science for occupational reasons. But a wide fringe of readers read for other purposes as well, and the individual reader may just as often be a member of this minority; or a member of the major group may just as often be influenced by a combination of other items also. These subsidiary satisfactions must be uncovered and reduced to their true importance as minor purposes now covered by the major subject motives before we shall know all we wish to know about reading motives.

For both the group and the individual the Rochester data provide sufficient evidence to justify the belief that the dominating motives which embrace all subject fields in all types of reading are: (1) information-getting, both for the solution of immediate, limited problems and for the understanding of social and personal conditions sometimes already present and sometimes not specifically foreseen at the time of reading; (2) recrea-

tion, with its implication primarily of emotional satisfaction and secondarily of relaxation, escape, identification of self, sympathy for others, and general information; (3) aesthetic appreciation of the artistically beautiful in books; and (4) critical understanding of the effect produced by the book. All of these are thought to govern choice of what is enjoyably read. We surmise that the second of the four dominating motives is more powerful with women readers than the first and that with men readers the opposite is true. For the third and fourth motives we know only that they represent growth processes and that they operate by selecting from the mass of literary experiences those which give meaning and significance to life for the individual, that they are not identified with single emotional or informational satisfactions but with all of them as they contribute toward this selectivity. For the intellectually mature they represent an urge which increases with exercise until they become the first consideration in literary choice. The basic differences in the relative strength of their appeal probably bear no relation to sex but are more likely affected by the reading level of the individual, although the evidence of the Rochester readers is not conclusive on this point.

Once the dominating motive of the four has been established it is still necessary to identify the occasion which has prompted interest in the subject and the satisfaction which is likely to be derived. Since these may have started far back in some trait of the reader's personality or in some real or vicarious experience, the answer is not easily obtained. Eventually we must know more about the part that occasions play in inducing reading interest, particularly about how lasting their effect is. We suspect that where the occasion is short-lived, interest is also. There may be cited the increase of fiction-reading during the peak of the depression, an increase which, as the Lynds showed in Middletown,¹⁰ dwindled away as the financial crisis cleared.

But before the lasting interest in such reading or the permanency of the occasion which induces reading can be tested we shall have to identify as large a number of these occasions as can

¹⁰ R. S. and H. M. Lynd, *Middletown in transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), p. 253.

be shown to affect group-reading. Once the degree of response from national and local happenings, from personal idiosyncrasies repeated elsewhere in others, from social pressures frequently encountered, has been discovered and tested for various parts of the country, the librarian will have a third determinant to add to the subject-interest and reader-identity factors which he now takes into consideration when ordering books for a community group. He will never be able to prepare completely in advance for the highly individual occasion which sends the single reader to his library, because it is impossible to foresee traits unless they show themselves in groups. But since occasions are thought to repeat themselves only with regard to certain stable factors, like the job, this is not an important matter. (Cf. the likelihood of another request for material on the Taj Mahal prompted by the reason which sent the young father to the bookstore.) For group-reading it is another matter. Hence this writer earnestly hopes that there may be made, not too far in the future, such a preliminary study based on the distinction between occasion and satisfaction which has been analyzed in this investigation—a study which will identify the various group occasions more completely than this investigation could undertake.

If we accept the theory that nearly all reading is done for vicarious experience it may seem unfortunate that much reading of inferior materials is done; that certain subjects like education and history are read for an artificial purpose (the school assignment) instead of for a genuine personal satisfaction; that other subjects are read for the cruder substitutions of improbable, adventurous experience rather than for significant and true experience. But the truism of librarianship holds good here: we deal with the reader first and then with the book—with the reader in all stages of informational, emotional, and critical readiness. Though they are driven by the same urges, men are at different stages of critical ability and aesthetic appreciation of what is truly significant, because of differences in life experience, in reading experience, and in the delicacy and soundness of their critical processes. Hence the account which might satisfy one reader as an authentic glimpse into another's emotional crisis

or as a profound and logical development of a psychological theory would repel a discriminating reader whose knowledge is more comprehensive.

This does not mean that the naïve reader gains nothing in the process, but simply that he gains less—which may be all he is ready for in all events. For, as Howard Mumford Jones has remarked in another connection,¹¹ the poorest of our trashy novels also serves to point out the fact that there are primal qualities of good and evil in the world; and even though the development of this thesis be far from the immature reader's thought when he takes up the book, this subsidiary return comes to him also. But because all readers do not enjoy equally well having the primal qualities of good and evil depicted for them and because some expect the nuances of human character to show, too, it follows that the librarian must know in which group the reader stands, i.e., what constitutes information or recreation or aesthetic quality for him and what by-products of each are expected. In general, the richer the book is in what the individual likes to add to his general store of information, the better he likes it; and the more significant and true to his own aesthetic experience, the better the critical reader likes it.

If we accept the search for vicarious experience as the fundamental urge, we can more fully understand why motives overlap in the reading process, since in a single real-life act or situation many satisfactions may be involved. Nevertheless, that same single real-life experience is usually dominated by a major impulse, no matter what others accompany it.

From this theory of vicarious participation, also, we get fuller understanding of why reading motives do not lend themselves readily to verbal labeling and ranking—too many elusive, subjective factors are involved. Like the Old Man of the Sea, the same character changes shape too often. What is recreation for one reader is hard work for another, depending solely upon the urge for mastery. What the reader labels "escape" may be either occasion or satisfaction, and we cannot depend on him to distinguish which for us. When a man is earnestly engaged in

¹¹ "The place of books and reading in modern society," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, XXVII (1933), 585.

developing a hobby he may be actuated by the play or recreational impulse or by the desire for change and new experience or by the desire for either specific or general information or by a wish to improve his skill and technique or by an aesthetic wish to express himself in artistic media or by all of these reasons at one and the same time. One or all these reasons may have been originally prompted by some obscure desire for mastery, occasioned perhaps as a result of maladjustment in the social world, perhaps as compensation for another skill denied him. Who can say from his scoring of listed items which of these looms largest for his satisfaction and which is most important for the librarian's consideration? All contribute their part in the pattern of his reading act.

It must be repeated that the scoring of single items will not distinguish the true differences in men's reading motives. Nor is it enough to say that all are prompted by a single dominant motive which has in its train a host of subordinate purposes resulting from the readers' emotional cravings. Several individuals may be prompted by the same dominant motive, and yet their needs may be very different. Just as the medical specialist sometimes finds himself baffled by pathological conditions readily apparent to the general practitioner who knows thoroughly the patient's history, so the librarian attempting to isolate one trait without regard for the reader's whole personality is likely to go astray. The answer, rather, lies in the individual's personality, in his history, and in his plans for the future.

Separate tests, therefore, seem imperative before the question of reading motivation is completely answered. These tests should attempt to point out essential differences in external occasions for reading and in satisfactions derived, based upon essential differences in men's intellectual capacity, emotional cravings, and social strata, and, combined, they should show the relationship which each of these bears to the whole. Then we should know what proportion of importance to assign to such motives as friends' example and conversation, to curiosity and the desire for escape, to superior critical powers, and to wider life experience. The part the reader's personal and literary background plays; how much his age, sex, education, and occupa-

tion contribute; how much the socioeconomic group among whom he moves influences him; when his avocations prompt him; and, more than all these, perhaps, how deeply his ambitions and frustrations color his reading—all these will be taken into proportionate consideration, and from this pattern the true picture of his reading motives should be revealed.

This is not an easy task, nor is the proper method for accomplishing it at once perceptible. It is possible that techniques may be borrowed or adapted from the educational world or that researchers in psychological method will aid in identifying the intangibles attached to the reading motive. For example, the Employment Stabilization Research Institute of the University of Minnesota, under the direction of M. R. Trabue, experimented early in the depression period with a series of aptitude, personality, and intelligence tests which in combination proved sufficiently effective to permit the Adjustment Service of the American Association of Adult Education to use them in its employment service.¹² Thurstone and his colleagues are now at work upon the isolation of the primary mental abilities in an attempt to account for individual differences in human ability.¹³

If the elaborate battery of tests these psychologists are now trying out proves to be as valid and as well calibrated as, say, the intelligence tests which their predecessors made practicable for us, it may well be that comparable multiple-factor methods can be worked out for the identification of reader motives. It is to be hoped that they may, since the scoring of single traits or the scoring of occasions and satisfactions alone does not provide adequate information for the librarian who wishes to give assistance to the reader searching for books. Until such methodology is worked out and tested, however, the librarian might well keep in mind such factors as the multiple motives which may be prompting the patron's search, the relative compulsion of the occasion of his need, and the gratifications he may expect from his reading.

¹² G. L. Bergen *et al.*, *Use of tests in the Adjustment Service* ("Adjustment Service series," No. 4 [New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1935]).

¹³ L. L. Thurstone, *Primary mental abilities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938).

